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New York

President:	Mr. Menan	(Togo)
Members:	Azerbaijan	Mr. Mehdiyev
	China	Mr. Yang Tao
	Colombia	Mr. Osorio
	France	Mr. Bonne
	Germany	Mr. Berger
	Guatemala	Mr. Rosenthal
	India	Mr. Hardeep Singh Puri
	Morocco	Mr. Bouchaara
	Pakistan	Mr. Tarar
	Portugal	Mr. Cabral
	Russian Federation	Mr. Churkin
	South Africa	Mr. Laher
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Tatham
	United States of America	Mrs. DiCarlo

Agenda

Briefing by the Chairperson-in-Office of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe

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The meeting was called to order at 3.10 p.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

Briefing by the Chairperson-in-Office of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe

The President (*spoke in French*): Under rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite Mr. Eamon Gilmore, Chairperson-in-Office of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe and Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade of Ireland, to participate in this meeting.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

I give the floor to Mr. Gilmore.

Mr. Gilmore: It is a pleasure and an honour for me to speak before the Security Council in my capacity as Chairperson-in-Office of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE). In my address today, I will outline the main priorities of Ireland's OSCE chairmanship and also discuss a number of key issues common to both of our organizations.

With 56 participating States covering a population of over 1 billion, the OSCE is the world's largest regional organization under Chapter VIII of the United Nations Charter. The United Nations and the OSCE are founded on core principles and common values. We share a common belief in a comprehensive approach to security that addresses that challenge in all of its dimensions.

In my address to the OSCE Permanent Council in January, I outlined that Ireland would adopt a pragmatic and fair-minded approach to our chairmanship responsibilities. I noted that our aim was to elaborate a set of priorities that would ensure a balanced and coherent approach across all three dimensions: politico-military, economic and environmental, and human. I can assure the Security Council today that we will take forward work in all areas in 2012. We will do everything in our power to achieve concrete results and deliver tangible benefits. I am firmly committed to the OSCE's concept of a common, comprehensive and indivisible security based on a cross-dimensional set of agreed principles and commitments.

Ireland has always attached importance to the human dimension, and we will have an ambitious agenda this year. The Irish chairmanship will work closely with the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights, the OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities, and the Office of the Representative on Freedom of the Media to address specific instances where OSCE commitments are not being met and to take forward a number of key issues.

We intend to prioritize the issue of internet freedom. As in other parts of the world, the threat to freedom of expression online is ever-present in the OSCE region and appears to be growing. We will work to ensure that existing OSCE commitments in relation to freedom of expression and freedom of the media apply to all forms and means of their exercise. As part of these efforts, we intend to organize a conference in Dublin in June for OSCE participating States, at which we will aim to move towards a common understanding of the issues at stake.

Human dimension events are also planned on a range of other topics. We intend to organize meetings focused on freedom of association and assembly, freedom of religion and belief, trafficking in human beings, and racism and intolerance in sport. Ireland also intends to maintain the highest standards for OSCE election observation activities. This year will see important elections throughout the OSCE region.

In the politico-military dimension, we hope to see continued progress on the updating of confidence- and security-building measures and enhancement of the conflict prevention capacity of the OSCE. We will take forward work that will enable the OSCE to deepen its involvement in all phases of the conflict cycle and to strengthen its capacity to tackle conflict, from prevention to resolution. In this regard, we will work closely with OSCE Secretary General, Lamberto Zannier, on implementation of the conflict cycle decision that was agreed at the Vilnius ministerial meeting.

We will examine the options available to us to achieve progress in the areas of arms control, conflict prevention and resolution, and transnational threats, which pose challenges to all of our societies. In relation to the updating of the Vienna Document, we will work with the chairs of the Forum for Security

Cooperation to build on the good results achieved last year. We will also encourage participating States that are party to the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe to strive to overcome the current impasse in this area.

A shared challenge for our two organizations is to ensure close and effective cooperation to tackle complex transnational threats. One key area of shared interest is counter-terrorism, where the focus of the OSCE's activity is to support the implementation of United Nations anti-terrorism instruments. The OSCE also cooperates closely with the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime. During our chairmanship, we will build on our joint efforts to tackle transnational threats such as organized crime, cyberthreats — including cybercrime — drugs, terrorism and trafficking.

Within the economic and environmental dimension, the core theme of the Irish chairmanship will be the promotion of security and stability through good governance. We firmly believe that weak governance undermines economic development and exposes states to greater security risks. Here, too, we see great potential for building on the existing cooperation with the United Nations in this field.

Ireland's ratification last year of the United Nations Convention against Corruption signals our determination to further international cooperation in this area. The United Nations Convention is a comprehensive anti-corruption treaty that requires countries to implement legal and regulatory regimes within both the private and public sectors. The OSCE Ministerial Council decision on combating corruption specifically highlights this Convention and encourages OSCE participating States to ratify it. During our chairmanship, we will promote further dialogue within the OSCE on the role it can play to support and encourage implementation of the Convention.

During our chairmanship, we will focus in particular on measures to counter corruption, money-laundering and terrorist financing. We will also consider the issue of confiscation of the proceeds of criminal activity. In this regard, we intend to highlight the work of Ireland's Criminal Assets Bureau as a model for other participating States to consider.

As Chairperson-in-Office, I will seek ways in which progress can be made towards lasting settlements of a number of conflicts that persist in the OSCE area. Among these are the conflicts in Moldova regarding the territory of Transdniestria; in Georgia regarding the territories of Abkhazia and South Ossetia; and the Nagorno Karabakh conflict. I have appointed two Special Representatives to assist me in addressing these complex conflicts.

As regards Moldova and Transdniestria, we stand ready to build on the momentum achieved by Lithuania with the successful resumption of the official 5+2 talks. We look forward to hosting the first official talks under our chairmanship in Dublin later this month.

The situation in Georgia, particularly the humanitarian situation, is a matter of utmost concern. Ireland strongly supports the Geneva discussions in facilitating engagement and a way forward for all concerned. We very much welcome the rich cooperation with the United Nations in these discussions, and would like to pay tribute to the work of United Nations Representative to the Geneva international discussions, Ambassador Antti Turunen, and his team.

We also commend the continuing efforts of the OSCE's Minsk Group in addressing the long-running Nagorno Karabakh conflict and look forward to working closely with the co-Chairs and other members of the Minsk Group during the year.

In supporting these efforts, we will draw from our own experience of conflict resolution. I will host a conference in Dublin on 27 April that will focus on Northern Ireland as a case study, aiming to explore a number of aspects that might be applicable to conflict situations in the OSCE region. I believe that we can encourage those engaged in negotiations elsewhere to persevere in their efforts by showing that it has been possible to create and build peace in Northern Ireland and by explaining how this was achieved and how it is being sustained. I will also share some of Ireland's experience in this area through the United Nations Group of Friends of Mediation, of which Ireland is a member. Let me take this opportunity to welcome the vital enhancement in recent years of the United Nations capacity in the area of mediation, which we have been pleased to be able to support on a national basis.

At a time of constrained resources and ever-more complex transnational threats, a closer partnership between the OSCE and the United Nations is indispensable. Our cooperation has advanced not only in the development of common approaches to the

challenges we face, but also at the field operational level. The OSCE mission in Kosovo is the first example of the organization's becoming an integral part of an operation led by the United Nations. That mission has a specific tasking from 1244 (1999) to take the lead role in matters relating to institution and democracy building and human rights and the rule of law. Indeed, the former United Nations Special Representative for Kosovo and Head of the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo, Lamberto Zannier, is now serving as Secretary General of the OSCE. In the valuable contribution which he has made to each, he embodies the ever-closer relationship between the two organizations.

Close and effective cooperation exists in many of the OSCE's 16 field missions with many of the United Nations agencies, notably the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights. On Afghanistan, I recall that Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon specifically welcomed greater OSCE involvement when he addressed the OSCE summit in Astana. I am pleased to confirm that we will promote implementation of the decision agreed at the Vilnius ministerial meeting through concrete projects in Afghanistan, in close cooperation with the United Nations and other international actors in the region.

The United Nations has provided strong leadership on the issue of women and peace and security, reflected in resolution 1325 (2000). Ireland's national action plan, launched last November, is a powerful statement of our commitment to the rights of women affected by conflict. Within the OSCE context, the promotion of resolution 1325 (2000) is carried out by the Forum for Security Cooperation. In that regard, a dedicated military office, based in our permanent mission to the OSCE in Vienna, has been tasked to examine ways that the Forum can support the implementation of that and other resolutions related to gender and security.

A great many tasks lie before us as we direct the work of this organization across a wide range of activities. It is a signal honour for Ireland to discharge this important multilateral responsibility in 2012. As Chair of the OSCE, a key regional partner of the United Nations, I pledge my full support and partnership. I am confident that our cooperation will be richly successful.

The President (*spoke in French*): I thank Mr. Gilmore for his briefing.

I shall now give the floor to members of the Council who wish to make statements.

Mr. Tatham (United Kingdom): I should like to extend a warm welcome to the Tánaiste and Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade of Ireland, Mr. Gilmore, to the Council today in his capacity as Chairperson-in-Office of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE). I thank him for his briefing.

The United Kingdom fully supports the priorities set out by the Chairperson-in-Office today. The promotion and protection of human rights, fundamental freedoms, democracy and the rule of law are cornerstones of the OSCE. Greater effort is needed by all OSCE participating States to ensure that they not only fully meet the commitments they have freely entered into, but that they also recognize that commitments need to keep pace with developments in the real world. For example, freedoms of the media need to be updated to reflect the huge changes in information technology of recent years. We recognize that consensus in this sensitive area will be difficult to reach, but we are confident that Irish leadership, building on the excellent work of the Lithuanian OSCE chairmanship in 2011, can take us further forward. I welcome the emphasis on freedom of expression online in the address that we have just heard from the Chairperson.

As the Chairperson-in-Office has just pointed out, conflicts within the OSCE space remain unresolved. We very much welcome Ireland's intention to place particular emphasis on the need to advance the resolution of such conflicts. Of course, each conflict is different, with its own history and circumstances, but important lessons can be learned from successful and unsuccessful efforts at conflict resolution and prevention. We echo the thoughts of the Chairperson-in-Office that sharing the successful experience of conflict resolution in Northern Ireland may help reveal some common ground for fresh ideas and renewed impetus. We therefore welcome and look forward to the planned conference in Dublin in April to look at those issues. We will be ready to engage fully and at high level in that event.

The United Kingdom also remains committed to the conventional arms control and confidence and

security building regimes across Europe, which contribute greatly to transparency and predictability, and therefore to European stability. We regret that implementation in this area is incomplete. It is clear that more effort is needed within the OSCE to update and revitalize those key instruments, and we very much welcome the intention of the Irish Chair to support such an effort.

The United Kingdom currently has the honour to hold the chairmanship of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe. We fully appreciate the expectations that come with this rare opportunity to lead the Council of Europe's work for six months. The overarching theme of our chairmanship is the promotion and protection of human rights, mirroring the importance we attach to the human dimension work of the OSCE. We urge all OSCE participating States, first, to redouble their efforts to meet their existing human dimension commitments fully, and secondly, to recognize the need to extend those commitments further. We must review issues such as the protection of journalists and the freedom of expression in digital media and cyberspace.

The continent of Europe has experienced enormous political change over the past 30 years, driven by the will of the people for greater freedoms and true democracy. It is the duty of all responsible Governments to listen and respond appropriately and fully to the demands of the people whom they serve.

The role of chairmanship-in-office of the OSCE is both a great honour and a heavy responsibility. We applaud how Ireland has set about the task, with a programme and priorities that promote those principles of human rights and fundamental freedoms, democracy, good governance and the rule of law on which the OSCE is founded.

Mr. Churkin (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We welcome the Chairperson-in-Office of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade of Ireland, Mr. Gilmore. The priorities of the Irish chairmanship presented to the Security Council establish a solid base for implementing well-designed plans, which it is our hope will allow that organization to reach a qualitatively new level. We all want to see an OSCE that is more effective and meets the interests of all its member States.

The Russian Federation advocates a comprehensive development and improvement of cooperation between the United Nations and its Security Council, on the one hand, and regional and subregional mechanisms on the other, among which the OSCE occupies an important place. Such cooperation should be based on the solid foundation of the United Nations Charter, especially Chapter VIII, taking due account of the relative advantages of these global organizations and mechanisms. There is no doubt that the Security Council holds the principal responsibility for maintaining international peace and security.

The OSCE enters the new year with a solid set of tools for establishing a community of equal and undivided security, stretching from Vancouver to Vladivostok. First and foremost is the problem of transnational threats and challenges, such as combating drugs, the framework for police activity and the counter-terrorism mandate of the OSCE. We look forward to the completion of agreements on the strategic instruments and the adoption of relevant decisions.

An important challenge is to develop confidence-building measures in the use by member States of information and communication technology to bolster the United Nations global efforts to improve international information exchange and security. We hope that the outcome of the annual security review conference, as well as the conferences on combating drugs and terrorism, will make major regional contributions to these global efforts, including those conducted under Security Council auspices.

The OSCE human dimension requires rethinking, above all in rejecting selectivity on country and thematic issues and to give due prominence to important themes in human rights issues. Crisis resolution remains one of the key functions of the OSCE. We believe that the lasting settlement of conflicts is possible only through substantive, creative negotiations towards compromise, involving all concerned parties. To that end, the OSCE chairmanship should take into account that some of the so-called frozen conflicts no longer need to be so. Our approach must take account of new geopolitical realities.

We hope that the work of the OSCE in 2012 in that area will be based on the agreed principles of settlement: consensus, the rule of international law, the peaceful settlement of conflicts through negotiations

within existing forums, the unacceptability of the use of force, and consent by all parties to conflicts to the measures proposed by the OSCE. We support efforts to reform the OSCE to make its work more effective, especially by reviewing its founding document. We hope that Ireland will pursue efforts in that matter.

We hope that the philosophy of the Irish chairmanship set out by Mr. Gilmore goals will allow the organization to overcome the crises of recent years and to adapt to the new global realities. We are ready to work with the Irish chairmanship and all other participating States on this issue. We wish Mr. Gilmore every success in addressing the current urgent challenges facing the OSCE.

Mrs. DiCarlo (United States of America): I would like to welcome Deputy Prime Minister Gilmore to the Security Council and congratulate both him and Ireland on having assumed the chairmanship of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe. I also thank him for his comprehensive briefing today.

The Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) has unique capabilities to assist the 56 OSCE participating States and 12 OSCE partner States in addressing a range of security concerns. As the world's largest Chapter VIII regional organization under the United Nations Charter, the OSCE is a key partner in implementing the international legal obligations, as called for in Security Council resolutions. It is an effective regional multiplier for the United Nations and contributes meaningfully to advancing peace and stability. In this regard, I have several points I wish to make.

First, the United States appreciates the crucial role the OSCE plays in democratic institution-building, including by observing elections and providing technical assistance to Governments and civil society. The United States also welcomes the OSCE's commitment to supporting transition in North Africa and to working with Governments that seek to build pluralistic and democratic societies. We welcome continued close cooperation between the United Nations, the OSCE and other regional organizations in assisting this transition. In the Western Balkans, Eastern Europe, Central Asia and the Caucasus, the OSCE's 16 field missions and offices support a wide range of United Nations priorities and specialized agencies, particularly the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights.

For example, the OSCE supported the creation of regional security centres in Central Asia and the Caucasus through its field missions. The OSCE office in Baku is working with the United Nations Economic Commission in Europe to promote an agreement between Azerbaijan and Georgia on shared water resources. The OSCE mission in Kosovo plays a critical role in assisting the development of Kosovo's democracy and new institutions. For example, the mission helped to establish municipal offices in Kosovo to protect the rights of displaced persons, returnees and community members — a crucial element in supporting the United Nations efforts.

Secondly, we strongly support the OSCE's efforts to protect human rights and promote tolerance and non-discrimination through its Office of Democratic Institutions and Human Rights. The United States remains focused on gender issues, particularly discrimination and violence against women, and we greatly appreciate the OSCE's support, through its Forum for Security Cooperation, for the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000) on women and peace and security.

The OSCE is also an important forum for helping States adapt to the changes of the twenty-first century, including expanding our support for and protection of fundamental freedoms in this digital age. We look forward to the results of the June Dublin conference for OSCE States on this important issue.

Thirdly, the OSCE has demonstrated capacity in the fields of early warning, conflict prevention, conflict resolution and response to atrocities. We encourage progress in the Geneva Group process, co-chaired by the United Nations, the OSCE and the European Union, to resolve outstanding issues between Georgia and Russia. In Moldova, we welcome the resumption of the official 5+2 talks aimed at reaching a comprehensive settlement with regard to the Transdniestria issue. As a co-Chair of the Minsk Group, the United States remains committed at the highest levels to achieving a lasting and peaceful settlement of the Nagorno Karabakh conflict.

The United States applauds the work of the OSCE field offices in the Balkans in monitoring local war crimes trials and providing assistance to support legal reform processes. We welcome OSCE collaboration

with the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia on the War Crimes Justice Project, which transfers skills and knowledge to local courts. The OSCE Community Security Initiative is also helping rebuild trust between citizens and law enforcement following the unrest in Kyrgyzstan in 2010, which contributes to the United Nations work in post-conflict situations.

Finally, the OSCE continues its strong advocacy with participating States on combating national threats. The United States consistently advocates for the full implementation of Security Council resolutions, and we have found the OSCE to be a useful partner in this regard. To this end, we have provided extrabudgetary resources to the OSCE in support of ongoing United Nations non-proliferation efforts. We urge other Security Council members to consider providing a modest contribution, financial or in kind, to help sustain this successful regional initiative, which is a value-added contribution to the efforts of the Committee established pursuant to resolution 1540 (2004) and to the efforts of the United Nations Office of Disarmament Affairs.

The United States also supports the OSCE's ongoing projects with Central Asian States and Afghanistan towards strengthening those countries' capacities to combat cross-border security challenges, including drug trafficking, cyberthreats, terrorism and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. We further welcome the decision by OSCE ministers at the December 2011 Vilnius Ministerial Council meeting to broaden the organization's support to Afghanistan across all dimensions. We encourage as well the OSCE's efforts to promote cooperation between Afghanistan and the Central Asian States, which will facilitate those countries' long-term security, development and prosperity.

The United States is a proud member of the OSCE. We value the fundamental commitments of the organization, which have provided clarity, stability and continuity to participating States for more than 35 years in our common effort to promote comprehensive security throughout the Euro-Atlantic and Eurasian regions. These commitments remain as relevant today as they were in 1975.

Mr. Osorio (Colombia) (*spoke in Spanish*): Allow me first to thank the Chairperson-in-Office of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs and Trade of Ireland, Mr. Eamon Gilmore, for his statement and for his important briefing on OSCE cooperation with the United Nations and the security challenges they face.

The briefing should lead us to consider in-depth the functions of the Security Council itself. Chapter VIII of the United Nations Charter provides for regional organizations to play an integral role in promoting collective security and attaches importance to their vision, actions and initiatives in finding solutions in their respective regions. To this end, we have encouraged dialogue and cooperation with organizations in all regions of the world, because we believe that such engagement promotes better understanding of specific situations and comprehensive visions of security, encompassing the human, political, economic, environmental and military aspects of the regional dimension.

Colombia recognizes that the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe plays a very important role in conflict resolution and the promotion of peace, security, respect for human rights, and the rule of law. We note that the same principles guide both organizations, with which we share the view of liberty, democracy and respect for human rights as essential prerequisites of peace and security.

The interaction between the Security Council and the OSCE has allowed both bodies to exchange frank opinions and establish support mechanisms in areas of common interest. We value the OSCE's support for the work of the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo and its plans to extend its participation in Kosovo; its participation in Afghanistan and its cooperation with other countries of the region; and its regional initiatives to fight terrorism, cybercrime and the illegal arms trade, among other transnational challenges.

In Colombia's view, it is critical that the United Nations and the world's regional organizations complement each other's efforts to strengthen their institutional capacity in the framework of their purviews to address international security challenges, particularly conflict prevention, the establishment of confidence-building measures, mediation, crisis management and post-conflict stabilization. This will allow regional organizations to complement the Security Council's exercise of its main responsibility to

uphold peace and to focus on the priorities of their respective agendas.

In the negotiations for the Charter for the United Nations, one of the central issues in the discussion was how cooperation between regional organizations and the Security Council was to work. Some delegations viewed it as an obligatory first step before turning to the Security Council; others believed that it was not necessary in all cases. Our position favoured resort to regional efforts in the first instance with a view to preventing disputes, situations or events from evolving into major confrontation or conflict. At the same time, it remains true that the Security Council's capacity to act cannot be constrained in cases when the urgency or severity of circumstances require.

Finally, Colombia wishes to highlight the role that multilateralism plays in the resolution of the complex conflicts of the world today, and the important contribution of open communication and cooperation between regional organizations and the United Nations to join efforts in support of peace and prosperity. In this regard, we welcome the detailed briefing of Mr. Gilmore on the priorities identified by the Irish chairmanship and the cooperation of the OSCE with the United Nations and its contribution to international peace and security.

Mr. Mehdiyev (Azerbaijan): At the outset, I should like to welcome His Excellency Mr. Eamon Gilmore, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade of the Republic of Ireland and Chairperson-in-Office of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), and to thank him for his statement.

Azerbaijan supports the OSCE concept of comprehensive, cooperative and indivisible security, and considers the organization to be the most appropriate and unique framework for discussions on European security under Chapter VIII of the Charter of the United Nations. We believe that, as a regional arrangement, the OSCE has the potential to play a more consistent role in encouraging participating States to comply with their obligations under the United Nations Charter and the OSCE Helsinki Final Act of 1974, as well as to implement the resolutions adopted by the Security Council and the General Assembly. As an OSCE participating State and elected member of the Security Council, Azerbaijan stands ready to contribute to these efforts.

The OSCE provides an ongoing forum for discussion towards a settlement of the conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan, which sometimes is mistakenly referred to as the dispute over Nagorno Karabakh or even the conflict in Nagorno Karabakh. The correct use of terminology is important to addressing the root causes of the problem, especially in situations involving flagrant violations of international law. It is well known that the conflict is being dealt with by the OSCE Minsk Group. Relevant are resolutions 822 (1993), 853 (1993), 874 (1993), 884 (1993) adopted by the Security Council in 1993 in response to the illegal use of force against Azerbaijan and the occupation of its territories, as well as General Assembly resolution 62/243 on the situation in the occupied territories of Azerbaijan, adopted on 14 March 2008.

Although the mediation efforts conducted for over 20 years have not always been consistent and have yet to yield results, Azerbaijan continues to be committed to the negotiated settlement of the conflict. We proceed from the understanding that at the core of the ongoing political process is the settlement formula based on putting an end to the illegal occupation of our territories, the restoration of the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Azerbaijan, the return of forcibly displaced persons to their homes, and ensuring the peaceful coexistence of Azerbaijanis and Armenians in the Nagorno Karabakh region of Azerbaijan.

At the same time, the lack of agreement on political issues cannot be used as a pretext for contempt and disregard for international law, in particular international humanitarian and human rights law. Thus, continued illegal activities in the occupied territories of Azerbaijan, in particular those aimed at changing their demographic, social and cultural character, definitely serve to further the consolidation of the status quo of the occupation.

In 2005 and 2010, at our initiative in the United Nations, OSCE-led fact-finding missions visited the occupied territories of Azerbaijan. Both missions documented the facts of illegal activities in those territories involving, inter alia, the implantation of settlers, the extensive redrawing of boundaries, the changing of place names and the discriminatory treatment with respect to cultural property and sacred sites. However, we are seriously concerned that the recommendations of those missions remained on paper and that nothing is being done to translate them into

deeds. Azerbaijan hopes that the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office will insist on the need to immediately and unconditionally cease all actions that cause serious obstruction to the perspectives of a negotiated and international-law-based settlement of the conflict.

It is essential to strengthen OSCE capabilities in all areas of conflict prevention, crisis management and peacekeeping. We expect that the OSCE chairmanship will continue working on all elements of the conflict cycle, keeping in mind the OSCE documents incorporating and reaffirming the relevant approach in this regard. We believe that increasing attention to mediation-related topics within the United Nations, including in particular the recent adoption by the General Assembly of resolution 65/283 on strengthening the role of mediation in the peaceful settlement of disputes, conflict prevention and resolution, as well as the development of guidance for more effective mediation, may serve as a useful basis for deliberations in the OSCE in the coming months.

We expect that the OSCE will vigorously develop peacekeeping capacities in order to be adequately prepared to implement its role as a regional arrangement under Chapter VIII of the Charter of the United Nations and in accordance with chapter III of the OSCE Helsinki Document of 1992.

Azerbaijan also believes that the development of the police component of OSCE peacekeeping operations will contribute to efforts in maintaining regional peace and security. We consider it vital to further strengthen the cooperation and coordination between the United Nations and the OSCE in these areas.

One of the OSCE's major contributions to peace and security under the politico-military dimension is mainly delivered through arms control and confidence- and security-building regimes. The work on updating and tailoring these regimes to the current security environment should take into account the legitimate security needs of participating States, especially those non-members of military alliances with conflict-affected territories, and the consequences of conflict, including military intervention and illegal deployment.

The OSCE acknowledges the leading role of the United Nations in combating international terrorism and organized crime. In this context, better interaction between the two organizations — including, inter alia, by equipping the OSCE with the principles of cooperation and approaches elaborated within the United Nations in that area — would undoubtedly serve the greater unity of purpose and action in addressing transnational threats.

Azerbaijan attaches great importance to cooperation between the United Nations and the OSCE in the field of human rights and fundamental freedoms. Promoting tolerance and non-discrimination, countering racism, encouraging dialogue among cultures and civilizations, and addressing the fundamental rights of displaced persons, including their right to return, represent examples of areas in which the international community can benefit from close relations between the two organizations.

In conclusion, I would like to touch upon a particular aspect of environmental security that gives rise to the need for more coordinated efforts between the United Nations and the OSCE. Ageing nuclear power plants located in the OSCE area may pose serious risks to the security of States and their population. Therefore, the ongoing policy debate on stricter nuclear safety standards and the timely decommissioning of old-generation reactors represent an essential component of the targeted agenda on good governance and transparency in the field of security. We believe that the OSCE, along with other specialized institutions, including those within the United Nations system, based on its comprehensive and cooperative approach to security, might provide a complementary forum to explore ways to address this challenge.

Mr. Hardeep Singh Puri (India): I, too, would like to join my colleagues in welcoming His Excellency Mr. Eamon Gilmore, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade of Ireland, to the Security Council this afternoon. I thank him for his comprehensive briefing on the activities of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) and his priorities in the months to come.

India supports the role of regional organizations in the maintenance of international peace and security and their cooperation with the United Nations under Chapter VIII of the Charter. Article 54 of the Charter enjoins those organizations to keep the Security Council fully informed of their activities for the maintenance of international peace and security. We therefore warmly welcome the briefing by the OSCE's Chairperson-in-Office.

Mr. Gilmore covered a wide canvas of issues, several of them concerning our immediate and extended neighbourhood. Naturally, those are of great interest to my delegation. We appreciate the work that the OSCE has been doing to promote security in its political, military, economic, environmental and human dimensions. It has addressed a wide range of security-related concerns, including arms control, confidence- and security-building measures, human rights, national minorities, democratization, policing strategies, counter-terrorism and economic and environmental issues. The OSCE has contributed to managing some of the most important problems in the post-cold war period and world.

In the past decade or so, the OSCE has expanded its activities significantly in our neighbourhood, under the Asian Partners for Cooperation and the Asian Contact Group. We have noted the OSCE's cooperation with the Association of Southeast Asian Nations Regional Forum, of which India is a member, on matters related to confidence-building measures and preventive diplomacy. We also welcome the OSCE's partnership with Afghanistan in border security management and electoral assistance.

We wish the OSCE great success in its efforts and activities towards the promotion of understanding, peace and security among member and partner countries. We also extend our good wishes to the Irish chairmanship of the OSCE and to Mr. Gilmore personally. We hope that, under his stewardship, the OSCE will continue its important work.

Mr. Rosenthal (Guatemala) (*spoke in Spanish*): Let me join others in welcoming Deputy Prime Minister Eamon Gilmore, and in thanking him for his presentation. I congratulate him on assuming the chairmanship of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) and wish him every success in his mandate.

Guatemala is convinced that regional and subregional organizations can make an important contribution to further strengthening the multilateral system, including in the maintenance of international peace and security. I am sure that, under Ireland's chairmanship, the OSCE will promote dialogue and cooperation with the United Nations. Cooperation between the United Nations and the OSCE is a concrete product of an alliance that has helped to promote peace and security in Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia. We therefore call attention to several timely initiatives on themes that are on the agenda of the Security Council.

In Afghanistan, the OSCE has actively participated in efforts to enhance political dialogue, increase national capacities and support the democratic process. In that regard, Guatemala notes with satisfaction the close coordination between the OSCE and the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan. We recognize the assistance offered by the Government of Afghanistan in the areas of border security, police training and the struggle against drug trafficking.

With respect to the situation in Kosovo, the OSCE also plays a constructive role, in close coordination with the United Nations and the European Union, in an environment of great challenges. Guatemala recognizes the work that has been accomplished, among other things, to strengthen the rule of law.

We note the priorities outlined by Ireland for its chairmanship in 2012, and we are pleased to learn that, alongside the efforts to resolve long-lasting conflicts, attention will also be paid to a renewed commitment to democracy, the rule of law and human rights, as well as to new avenues for promoting freedom of expression in the digital era. We welcome its decision to hold a meeting in Dublin in April to share its experience in conflict resolution. We agree that every conflict situation is different, but it is also true that there are always lessons learned and experiences to share, especially from a regional perspective.

Finally, Guatemala joins other countries in expressing its support for the vision and priorities Ireland has established for the OSCE's work this year. We look for[illegible] with interest to fruitful cooperation between that organization and the United Nations.

Mr. Berger (Germany): I join my colleagues in warmly welcoming Mr. Eamon Gilmore, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade of Ireland, to the Council today. I also thank him for his comprehensive briefing setting out Ireland's priorities as it assumes the chairmanship-in-office of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) for 2012. Germany looks forward to working with the Irish chairmanship on the key issues the OSCE is facing, including the chairmanship's priorities.

Let me briefly comment on four aspects.

First, we consider progress in the resolution of the remaining protracted conflicts in the OSCE area to be of particular relevance. We welcome the recent decision of the Ministerial Council of the OSCE to strengthen the OSCE's capability in conflict management. That area, together with its newly strengthened capacities to deal with transnational threats, will be one of the key parameters of the OSCE's work in the months to come.

Germany commends the OSCE's active participation in the political process aimed at settling the Transdniestrian conflict. We welcome the resumption of the formal 5+2 talks under last year's Lithuanian chairmanship of the OSCE. Germany fully and actively supports the Irish chairmanship in its efforts to encourage and facilitate steady progress on that issue. We express our hope that the conflict parties will extend their full cooperation with those efforts.

Germany also welcomes the role of the OSCE in pursuing a settlement of the Nagorno Karabakh conflict within the framework of the Minsk Group. We commend the Russian, United States and French co-Chairs of the Minsk Group for their efforts, and would welcome the continuation of the additional Russian initiative of meetings with the conflict parties on the highest political level. We believe that a strengthening of OSCE monitoring activities and the inclusion of humanitarian measures could prove beneficial.

On Georgia, we remain committed to the principle of re-establishing an OSCE presence throughout Georgia. It remains important that all parties fully implement the 2008 ceasefire agreements. We continue to support the active engagement of the OSCE in the ongoing Geneva talks to reduce tensions and build trust among affected communities. We also stress the importance of the functioning of the two incident prevention mechanisms, and welcome the recent exchange of detainees as a result of the meetings under that instrument.

Secondly, as regards the implementation of commitments made with respect to the human rights dimension in the OSCE area, Germany remains particularly concerned about existing restrictions on fundamental freedoms — in particular the freedom of the media and the freedoms of expression and of assembly — in many OSCE participating States. We welcome the Irish initiative to prioritize the issue of Internet freedom.

In the context of the democratic process, we consider OSCE election observation missions to be a vital instrument. We commend the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights for providing the relevant methodology, and we would like to thank Minister Gilmore for his clear commitment to the OSCE's role in election observation activities.

Thirdly, concerning the economic and environmental dimension, we welcome the Irish chairmanship's promotion of security and stability through good governance. Good environmental governance will be a key topic at the forthcoming United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development. In that context, the environment and security initiative is an important example of inter-agency cooperation and partnership between the OSCE, the United Nations Environment Programme, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and others. Germany will complement efforts in that field by hosting a conference on water issues with OSCE participating States from Central Asia on 7 and 8 March in Berlin.

Good governance also comprises the fight against corruption, money-laundering and the financing of terrorism. In that field, we will support the Irish chairmanship in view of pursuing the objectives of the United Nations Conventions on Transnational Organized Crime and against Corruption in the OSCE area.

Fourthly, referring to the politico-military dimension, let me underline that Germany attaches great importance to further developing synergies between the OSCE and the United Nations. In that regard, we welcome the first ever memorandum of understanding and annual plan of action agreed last year between the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime and the OSCE secretariat, which provides an excellent framework for intensifying programmatic coordination, joint programming and even joint fundraising. We look forward to similar initiatives — for example, with UNDP — in the traditional area of cooperation on small arms and light weapons and ammunition stockpile projects in the OSCE region.

Let me also point to the exemplary cooperation between the United Nations and the OSCE in Kosovo, where, as an integral pillar of the United Nations

Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo, the OSCE contributes to the security and well-being of all communities. Moreover, the OSCE continues to be an attractive model for regional cooperation, in particular for our neighbouring OSCE Partners for Cooperation in the Mediterranean region and, as our Indian colleague mentioned, in Asia. In that context, the application of Mongolia to become a participating State of the OSCE is noteworthy and deserves our support. Regarding the OSCE partner Afghanistan, Germany welcomes the Vilnius Council's decision to further strengthen the OSCE's support of stabilizing that country.

As Foreign Minister Westerwelle pointed out at the OSCE Ministerial Council in Vilnius last December, the OSCE can and should pursue efforts aimed at creating a Euro-Atlantic security community reaching from Vancouver to Vladivostok. That is one of the main tasks the OSCE assigned itself at the Astana summit. As an important step in that direction, Minister Westerwelle spoke of a "track two" initiative being undertaken by German, French, Polish and Russian think tanks to organize a series of joint academic conferences on that subject in the course of 2012, starting on 20 March in Berlin.

Finally, let me thank the Chairperson-in-Office once again for his briefing, and reiterate Germany's full support for the Irish OSCE chairmanship.

Mr. Bonne (France) (*spoke in French*): Allow me to welcome to the Security Council today the Chairperson-in-Office of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), Mr. Eamon Gilmore, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade of Ireland. Like its European partners, France shares his vision and will to concentrate on a limited number of well-identified priorities with a view to the ministerial conference in Dublin in December.

The OSCE is a unique model for cooperation based on the conviction that ensuring the security of the European continent must go hand in hand with the promotion of human rights, democracy and the rule of law. At the Astana summit in 2010, the participating States made important commitments and reaffirmed their shared objectives for regional security, economic and human development, and respect for human rights.

The threats to fundamental freedoms and human rights are a reality that concerns and motivates us. In that regard, the revolutions in the Arab countries have reminded us of the universality of those principles. We must see to it that these values are not thrown into doubt in Europe as well.

From that point of view, we support the choice of the Irish chairmanship to stress the human dimension and its will to prioritize respect for commitments made in the area of human rights, especially respect for fundamental freedoms over the Internet. The freedoms of expression and of the media are challenges that mobilize the United Nations as well. In that regard, fruitful synergies can certainly be found between the two organizations.

We trust that the chairmanship will not neglect other dimensions covered by the OSCE. Indeed, from Central Asia to Afghanistan, as well as the Balkans, the OSCE has demonstrated its essential role in conflict resolution and the promotion of peace in the region, and hence its ability to act in concert with other regional organizations, for example in Kyrgyzstan alongside the United Nations and the European Union.

Accordingly, the decision taken in Vilnius to strengthen OSCE capacity in the area of conflict prevention is a step forward that we believe should be strengthened. Encouraged by the resumed 5+2 talks on Transdniestria, we remain engaged in the collective effort to resolve the Nagorno Karabakh conflict as co-Chair of the Minsk Group. In 2008, the Georgian crisis also proved that war between two participating States of the OSCE was possible. France therefore supports the Geneva talks, which is another good example of cooperation between international organizations in the service of peace.

With respect to the politico-military dimension, significant progress is expected in the implementation of a security community, as expressed at the Astana summit. From that point of view, it is important to continue updating the Vienna Document. As a participating State of the OSCE, France is prepared to consider those issues and to discuss them with other States at the annual meeting on security questions in June. We also expect the OSCE to remain committed to the struggle against transnational threats, especially human trafficking, the fight against organized crime, money-laundering and corruption.

Finally, from a longer-term perspective, I recall that, at the Ministerial Council of the OSCE in Vilnius on 7 December 2011, to which my German colleague referred, France announced the launch of an initiative

to create a network of French, German, Polish and Russian think tanks with a view to organizing, during the first half of 2012, four seminars on the implementation of a Euro-Atlantic and Eurasian security community. The second of these seminars will be held in Paris in April.

I again thank the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade of Ireland for participating in this meeting, and again assure him of our full support throughout his chairmanship. We count on him to strengthen the links between the OSCE and the United Nations in line with our shared objectives of peace, stability, security and respect for human rights.

Mr. Yang Tao (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): I wish to thank Mr. Gilmore, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade of Ireland, for his briefing on behalf of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE).

The OSCE is an important organization for the maintenance of international peace and security in Europe. It is also a major partner of the United Nations. We value the contributions of the OSCE to preventive diplomacy, dispute settlement, post-conflict peacebuilding and counter-terrorism in the Caucasus, the Balkans and Central Asia. China has always maintained that dialogue and consultations are the best approach to resolving differences and to preventing and settling conflicts. We encourage the OSCE to continue its efforts in that regard.

China attaches great importance to cooperation between the United Nations and regional and subregional organizations in the maintenance of international peace and security. The primary responsibility for maintaining international peace and security lies with the Security Council, but the vigorous support of regional and subregional organizations is indispensable. Both sides should make full use of their comparative advantages and complement each other in a common effort to promote international peace and security.

Deputy Prime Minister Gilmore's briefing to the Council today will help the Security Council and the OSCE to enhance their communication and coordination and to take their pragmatic and effective cooperation in maintaining international peace and security to a higher level. We encourage the OSCE to continue to make full use of its comparative advantages and to play a positive role in maintaining regional peace, security and stability.

Mr. Cabral (Portugal): I would like to welcome Minister Eamon Gilmore of Ireland to the Security Council. I congratulate him on his assumption of the functions of Chairperson-in-Office of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) and thank him for the very informative briefing outlining the Irish priorities for the OSCE in 2012.

At the outset, let me assure the Minister that Portugal fully supports his efforts to promote the OSCE agenda and acquis in order to achieve the further strengthening of its legacy of a common, comprehensive, cooperative and indivisible concept of security. In fact, the outcome of the Vilnius Ministerial Council showed us that the OSCE's greatest strength and achievement — its comprehensive concept of security — cannot be taken for granted. It has to be defended and further developed.

That legacy is based on the understanding that global and regional security encompasses a large range of issues, which the OSCE has traditionally grouped into three dimensions, namely, the political-military, economic-environmental and human dimensions. We therefore welcome the Chairperson-in-Office's intention to promote progress across all areas of OSCE activities in a balanced manner, thus further expanding the excellent work done by his predecessor, the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Lithuania.

As an OSCE participant, Portugal attaches special importance to the advancement of close cooperation between the OSCE and other international organizations, in particular the valuable partnership being developed with the United Nations in addressing security challenges. In that context, I will refer briefly to the Irish programme of work for the OSCE, which is also relevant to further cooperation between our two organizations.

First, concerning the human dimension — a crucial component of the OSCE's comprehensive concept of security — we welcome the Chairperson-in-Office's aim to prioritize such issues, in particular when international commitments are not being met, working to achieve full respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, democratic institutions and the rule of law.

The Council has recently been confronted with situations where human rights and fundamental freedoms were systematically being violated, be it in Libya or, more recently, Syria, where the regime in Damascus is pursuing, unabated, the violent repression of its own people.

We also agree that freedom of expression and freedom of the media apply to all forms and means through which those rights are exercised, specifically where the Internet or other digital vehicles are concerned. We support the proposal of the Chairperson-in-Office to focus on racism, discrimination and intolerance, in particular in the context of sports events, bearing in mind this year's European championships in Poland and Ukraine and Olympic Games in the United Kingdom.

Secondly, Portugal believes that it is of particular importance to take stock of where we stand in terms of collective efforts to enhance arms control, prevent and resolve conflicts, and ensure stability and security at the regional and global levels. We commend the OSCE on updating the Vienna Document last year, and sincerely hope that the impasse in the field of conventional forces in Europe will be solved in the near future.

Under that political-military dimension, we consider it crucial to also address transnational threats, such as terrorism, the trafficking in persons, drugs, organized crime and cyber threats, including cybercrime, as outlined in the Chairperson-in-Office's programme.

Thirdly, Portugal is very concerned about the threat to security that protracted and unresolved conflicts in the OSCE area continue to present. That is an area with great potential for further cooperation between the United Nations and the OSCE. We welcome the substantial decision taken in Vilnius last December on the conflict cycle, aimed at enhancing the OSCE capacity to prevent and to respond to conflicts. We are encouraged by the nomination of two Special Representatives of the Chairperson-in-Office to Transdniestria and the South Caucasus.

Finally, I would like to reaffirm Portugal's confidence in the Irish leadership and reiterate our full support to the OSCE's Chairperson-in-Office in its efforts to fulfil the extremely demanding tasks that lay ahead, namely, in upholding and promoting the OSCE's wide acquis.

Mr. Tarar (Pakistan): I would like to join the other speakers in thanking Mr. Eamon Gilmore, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade of Ireland and Chairperson-in-Office of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), for his comprehensive briefing on the programme of work of the OSCE during the Irish chairmanship.

Pakistan supports the role of regional organizations in the maintenance of international peace and security and their cooperation with the United Nations, in accordance with Chapter VIII of the United Nations Charter. In view of their unique understanding of local issues, regional organizations can effectively contribute to addressing regional challenges and to strengthening the multilateral system.

The Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe — the predecessor organization to the OSCE — played an important role by providing a forum for dialogue and negotiation between the East and the West during the cold war and in dealing with the post-cold war transition in Europe. The OSCE continues to be relevant to its member States on matters of security, conflict resolution, addressing transnational tracks and the promotion of and respect for human rights.

Lately, it has also undertaken initiatives for dealing with post-conflict peacebuilding and economic and environmental issues as well. The OSCE's role in advancing the goals of peace and stability in and around Europe, including through conventional arms control among its members, is one of its most acknowledged activities. Pakistan itself has been advocating the cause of stability and peace in South Asia through a conventional arms control approach. Such approaches and best practices can be replicated in other regions.

We particularly value the work of the OSCE in the capacity-building of States. In that regard, we appreciate the activities of the Organization in Afghanistan in the capacity-building of the Afghan National Police, the combating of drug trafficking and customs and border management. Such initiatives will help overcome the significant challenges faced by that country.

In conclusion, we wish Ireland a very successful chairpersonship of the OSCE. We take note of its priorities and hope that under its stewardship the organization will continue with its important work.

Mr. Bouchaara (Morocco) (*spoke in French*): I should like to join my colleagues in welcoming to the Security Council the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade of Ireland, Mr. Gilmore, the Chairperson-in-Office of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE). I should like to thank him for his extensive briefing and to congratulate him on his assumption of the chairmanship of the OSCE for 2012.

Morocco accords particular importance to the role of regional and subregional organizations and to their cooperation with the United Nations, pursuant to the Charter of the United Nations and the resolutions adopted by the Security Council, which has primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security.

The OSCE makes a significant contribution in that respect through its efforts in the area of conflict resolution and conflict-prevention mechanisms, through the Conflict Prevention Centre. We welcome the experience and expertise that the OSCE has gained.

The Security Council was informed in February 2011 about the priorities of the Lithuanian chairmanship of the organization. We are very pleased to note the progress that has been made in achieving the objectives set out at that time. We believe that the priorities set out by the Irish chairmanship are in line with those objectives and build upon the achievements made. In that respect, we welcome the identification of priority areas such as the human dimension, arms control, transnational threats and the promotion of peace and security through good governance — areas to which Morocco attaches particular importance.

In March 2011, the representative of Morocco highlighted before the OSCE Mediterranean Contact Group the efforts Morocco was undertaking and the reforms it was carrying out at the political, socio-economic and human rights levels. Morocco is following closely the efforts of the Irish chairmanship and stands ready to enhance cooperation with the OSCE.

Morocco is one of the OSCE's Mediterranean partners and takes an active part in the Mediterranean Contact Group. Morocco's interest in the Mediterranean partnership of the OSCE derives from the great importance it accords to the priority areas of that partnership: migration and development; security issues, including the combat against terrorism; the combat against other forms of crime and discrimination; trafficking in persons; the promotion of tolerance; and the economic and environmental dimensions.

I should like to reiterate in that regard my country's call for a review of the status of the Mediterranean partners for cooperation in terms of ensuring them a more participative role. In that regard, Morocco had submitted a document reflecting the Moroccan vision of the format and content of that partnership, which includes a number of proposals aimed at enhancing the partnership and making it more substantive on the basis of a renewed agenda.

Morocco, which supports all initiatives aimed at promoting tolerance and interreligious dialogue and at combating all forms of discrimination, reiterates its appeal to enhance cooperation between the OSCE and the Alliance of Civilizations. We believe that that appeal is in line with the priorities set out by Ireland for its chairmanship and enhances the objectives of the OSCE in terms of peace, security and cooperation.

Morocco remains convinced that the United Nations could benefit from the experience and capacities of the OSCE in a number of areas, including arms control, non-proliferation and the combat against transnational threats. To that end, we are encouraged by Ireland's readiness to enhance cooperation with the United Nations, particularly in the area of combating transnational threats, including organized crime and terrorism.

Along those same lines, we welcome the entry into force of the memorandum of understanding between the United Nations and the OSCE on cooperation in the area of the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, particularly the implementation of resolution 1540 (2004).

We wish every success to the Irish chairmanship of the OSCE.

Mr. Laher (South Africa): My delegation joins others in welcoming the Chairperson-in-Office of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), Minister Eamon Gilmore, to the Security Council. We wish to thank him for his briefing on the work of the OSCE. As Minister Gilmore stated, Ireland's own experience in conflict resolution can be a positive influence on its work as Chair of the OSCE.

We have taken note of the challenges that the OSCE helps to address, from Kosovo to Moldova, to Nagorno Karabakh and to Georgia. The decision taken by the OSCE in Vilnius in December last year to increase its engagement in Afghanistan, in close cooperation with the United Nations and other international actors in the region, is also noted.

Cooperation between the United Nations and regional and subregional organizations in the area of peace and security is a priority for my delegation, and we welcome all efforts to strengthen the relationship between the OSCE and the United Nations.

South Africa's support for that relationship stems from our belief that multilateralism is strengthened through enhanced cooperation between the United Nations and regional and subregional organizations. Article 54 of Chapter VIII of the Charter, under which the OSCE is briefing the Council today, envisaged strong cooperation between the Security Council and regional organizations in the maintenance of international peace and security.

We reiterate, however, that each regional organization is unique in terms of the challenges it faces in the maintenance of international peace and security, as well as the manner in which it addresses those threats. Moreover, my delegation does not believe that the efforts of regional organizations in maintaining international peace and security absolve the Council of its Charter-mandated responsibilities as the guardian of international peace and security.

On 12 January, the Council unanimously adopted resolution 2033 (2012), which focused attention on cooperation between the United Nations and regional organizations, including in the area of conflict prevention, resolution and management. Speaking in the debate preceding the adoption of the resolution, President Jacob Zuma reaffirmed South Africa's support for the role of regional and subregional bodies in peace and security (see S/PV.6702). President Zuma stated that regional bodies are closer to the situation, are familiar with the issues and often understand the dynamics of the conflict. It is therefore our belief that regional organizations such as the OSCE are in a good position to advise accordingly on the situation on the ground and to tackle some of the challenges faced.

In conclusion, we are of the view that the sharing of experiences between the OSCE and other regional organizations, in particular the African Union, is vital, and we hope that such cooperation can be strengthened. We would like to assure the OSCE of our support for those efforts.

The President (*spoke in French*): I shall now make a statement in my capacity as representative of Togo.

I should like at the outset to welcome to the Security Council Minister Eamon Gilmore, Chairperson-in-Office of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), and to thank him for his briefing on the mandate and the multifaceted activities of his organization under his country's chairmanship. I commend the efforts that the OSCE is making in many varied areas, including human rights, democracy and good governance, the administration of justice and the rule of law.

We note that the combat against organized crime; peaceful coexistence between peoples, with an emphasis on the protection of minorities; the prevention of and the fight against terrorism; the protection of the environment; and non-discrimination are among the most important areas of activity of the OSCE. We note with interest that those areas broadly match the issues on the Security Council's agenda for February: transnational organized crime and violence against women, including girls, before, during and after armed conflicts.

Those issues are of great importance to my country. I am pleased that the OSCE is taking commendable action in those areas. We also acknowledge with satisfaction that the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights has considerable expertise in promoting democracy, the rule of law, human rights, tolerance and non-discrimination.

It is also encouraging to note that the OSCE programme includes a human dimension component as part of its response to the issues of freedom of expression and religion, intolerance and non-discrimination. We also welcome the OSCE's decision to address the difficult issue of racism and intolerance in sport. Indeed, although current events highlight the growing problem of racism in sport, there is an unfortunate and appalling tendency to minimize the issue.

We welcome the successful work of the OSCE in assessing the situation of ethnic minorities and the promotion of dialogue, as well as national legal reforms to curb ethnic conflict, which can jeopardize

peace, stability and relations within and among OSCE member States.

The commitment of the OSCE to preventing conflict using early warning mechanisms, conflict management and post-conflict reconstruction is an initiative that should also be encouraged. In that regard, Togo supports the OSCE's contributions to bringing peoples closer together, in particular when an upsurge in nationalism and identity politics carries the occasional risk of social exclusion and threatens peace.

We also commend the OSCE for its contribution to calming the situation in Georgia and resolving the Nagorno Karabakh conflict, as well as for its ongoing availability to work with the Minsk Group. Its determination to continue contributing its expertise to efforts aimed at resolving those various conflicts should be encouraged. We hope that the OSCE can make its expertise available to regional and subregional organizations, in particular in Africa.

I now resume my functions as President of the Security Council.

I give the floor to Mr. Gilmore so that he may respond to the comments made and questions raised.

Mr. Gilmore: I wish to thank you, Mr. President, and all representatives for their words of support. Time does not permit me to give a comprehensive reply to all of the issues raised here today, but if the Council will allow me to do so, I would like to briefly address a number of those issues.

The philosophy of our chairmanship is one of inclusion and involves a balanced approach across the various dimensions. We intend to give concrete expression to that philosophy in our actions throughout the year. That applies equally to such issues as OSCE reform, transnational threats, the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000), and respect for commitments across the board.

The Ambassador of the United Kingdom reminded us of the importance of the Council of Europe. I look forward to cooperating closely with Foreign Secretary Hague in his capacity as Chair of the Committee of Ministers.

Picking up on the theme of United Nations-OSCE cooperation, I am more convinced than ever of the importance of strong links between the two organizations. I will work closely with Secretary General Zannier to ensure that our practical cooperation is enhanced.

Looking ahead, I hope that we will soon be able to confirm the sequence of chairmanships of the OSCE up to and including 2015, which marks the fortieth anniversary of the Helsinki Final Act. I look forward to early engagement with the future chairs to chart out our common vision for the OSCE region.

As I outlined in my briefing, Ireland's approach to the protracted conflicts in the OSCE region is influenced by its own experience of successful conflict resolution in Northern Ireland. We firmly believe that even the most intractable conflicts can be settled with the goodwill and meaningful engagement of all sides. In that regard, I wish to re-emphasize my own commitment as Chairperson-in-Office to work within the existing structures and processes to contribute to the resolution of those conflicts.

As I have made clear, during our chairmanship, we will be giving prominence to the protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms in various areas. In many parts of the world, threats to human rights are multiplying. I note that Syria was mentioned in our debate today. If I may speak for a moment as Foreign Minister of Ireland, what we are currently seeing in Syria is completely intolerable. My Government condemns the appalling suffering of the Syrian people at the hands of the Al-Assad regime. Ireland is gravely concerned by that worsening crisis, which threatens to affect the wider region, and by the price that the people of Syria are being required to pay. My Government strongly supports the plan of the League of Arab States and all other efforts being made to bring the violence to an end and begin the process of political transition. While recognizing that, in recent days, the Security Council has been unable to speak with a single voice on Syria, Ireland fervently hopes that it will soon be able to deliver a united response to the challenge posed by that crisis.

Turning back to my role as OSCE Chairperson-in-Office, I look forward to cooperating closely with the United Nations on the programme of work on which we are embarking. I look forward to working closely with all other OSCE participating States during our chairmanship.

The President (*spoke in French*): There are no further speakers inscribed on my list. The Security Council has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of the item on its agenda.

The meeting rose at 4.35 p.m.